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# Eastford's Tercentenary

## Celebration;

## Appropriate Sermon

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS 354

LECTURE 10



Editor's Note: The following account of the Tercentenary celebration in Eastford, one of the most spectacular in this section of the state and the appropriate sermon delivered by the Rev. Walter E. Lanphear of Chaplin and Melbourne Beach, Florida, in commemoration of Connecticut's Tercentenary, the Eastford Parish, the Congregational church and the Town of Eastford, itself, was too great an event to be passed over lightly. We therefore, give the following columns of this paper over to the reprinting of a detailed report of the affair and the text of Mr. Lanphear's sermon.

In speaking of the program of the first day of the Tercentenary Celebration, which took place Saturday and Sunday, August 3rd and 4th, at a banquet held at General Lyon Hall in the evening, several guests expressed their surprise that a town with a population of five hundred and thirty five residents could present such an amazing spectacle. Whereupon another speaker arose with the opening remarks, "Many of you have expressed your surprise — I was dumbfounded!" He further declared that he had seen celebrations in towns of forty thousand population that could not compare with Eastford's entertainment.

The parade which started the program was a greater success than even the most enthusiastic expectations. Mr. Wood, director of Camp Eastford acted as Marshall. Handsome in velvet coat and powdered wig, Mr. Wood rode his horse down the State road which had been cleared by the continuous patrol of State Police. After him came the members of the American Legion, Raymond Benson Post, No. 111, of Woodstock, bearing the colors. The town officials rode next ahead of the Babcock Band, which is the oldest band continuously in existence of any in the country. Stowell Walker dressed as Uncle Sam marched sedately ahead of the representatives of the foreign population in their native costume and bearing their nation's flags. They included Czecho Slovakian, Finland, Poland, Ukraina, Sweden and representing also the first newcomers from Europe, the Chilkotts who came from Russia and the Dechands who joined us from France.

The Progress of Transportation was the next section of the parade. For the very earliest times and among a number of Indians and buckskin coated pioneers, was a family of pioneers whose small babies rode securely in a litter swung between two poles and dragged by a horse. This realistic and picturesque group was represented by the George Bennett family. A man and woman on horse back, the woman riding on the same horse behind her husband, was given by two boys from Camp Eastford. A yoke of steers and cart were from the farm of Harold Cunningham of Abington and an ox team was driven by Mr. Church of Chaplin. A sway back horse drew a chaise driven by Frank Bennett. A Station Wagon rolled by, a group from the Buell family dignified in high silk hats and long tailed coats rode high on a Tally Ho and as they passed the musical "tally ho" of a horn was heard.

Mrs. Lewin Newth and Miss Belle Fryer in full skirts and fetching bonnets peeped from the windows of a hack while an old high wheeled bicycle ridden by a Danielson resident careened and rolled as its rider waved gallantly to spectators. Then, in sharp contrast, Bowen's Garage brought us back to the present with a Ford car closely followed by the up-to-date school bus. A Fife and Drum Corps from Worcester bright in red and white uniforms was next in line leading the last section of the parade, the floats. Camp Eastford and Camp Yankee presented floats depicting Indian life and Indians and early settlers. Of especial interest was the long wagon load of young ladies dressed in red, white and blue costumes, as it was a copy of a float on which Mrs. Sarah Carpenter rode as a girl to a Republican Rally. Mrs. Carpenter's costume which she has preserved these many years was copied in making the costumes for this float.

Skyland Farm owned by Lewin Newth took first prize for its ingeniously designed float of baled hay and tall waving corn stalks. William Warren represented his farm, Mill Bridge Farm, with a pen of Holstein calves and a truck load of grain. A miniature forest rode by with State Forestryman Ralph Bunnell at the wheel. Harold Barrett's truck notified the public of the Nationwide Store and Joseph Chartier drove a gaily decked car for his Phoenixville store. Bowen's Garage presented new Fords and Szymanski's Garage represented itself with a truck load of Phoenixville school children among whom Mickey Mouse was to be seen riding.

H. B. Buell of Hillcrest Farm took second prize with his float representing the old Holman farm, as his farm was once known, where mulberry trees were grown to feed silk worms from which the mistress of the farm derived a very good profit. John Kaletchitz Trucking and Moving business showed a scene suggestive of the distances his business might carry him, and J. M. Tamen Handle Company sent a huge pasteboard carton out upon the road over which was suspended a fourteen foot axe handle. The carton was an exact replica of the carton used by the firm in shipping handles.

The Congregational Church had a congregation and a minister as its float while the Christian Endeavor Society was represented by two endeavors on two bicycles attached together and gay in red and white, the Society colors, and between them rose a huge red and white CE. A car of somewhat questionable character though still running under its own power and well manned by some very nondescript persons, fulfilled the necessity for something "horrible." Slater Black and Rich-



ard Tripp were the instigators of this vehicle.

Miss Mary Potter of Woodstock, Alexander Maitland of Thompson, and Judge Willis Covell of Pomfret were judges of the parade and gave first and second prizes as already stated to Lewin Newth and H. B. Buell, while the third prize went to Camp Eastford, for its float of old settlers. Upon the breaking up of the parade, business began at the booths where food was on sale for the noon luncheon. The menu was varied and appealing to the appetite. The organizations which furnished the food and sold it were: The Ladies' Aid Society, the P. T. A., the 4-H Club, the Christian Endeavor Society, and the Community Club.

At the afternoon entertainment, which was presented on a stage erected in front of the Town Hall and decorated very beautifully with cypress trees, Miss Mary Potter, Junior Supervisor of Americanization in the State Department of Education, of Hartford and Woodstock, and Rev. George Chapell of Warrenville were speakers. Miss Potter spoke most interestingly on her work and the Rev. Chapell gave a scholarly account of the history of the State for the past three hundred years. Previous to the main speakers of the afternoon, Mrs. James Andrews, representing the Governor as a member of his Tercentenary Commission, brought greetings from that body. Band music interspersed the items on the program.

The speaking was followed by a number of historical episodes depicting the history of Eastford under the direction of Mrs. M. Darwin Lewis and Mrs. John Smith. They were "Transfer of the Land from Uncas to his son," presented by Rev. George Reese; "Early Settlers" presented by Mrs. Royal Clemens; "Washington Passes Through Eastford," presented by Miss Catherine Tatem. John Hastings took the part of Washington and little Miss Doris French of Hartford took the part of Esther Work, who, the story is told, saw George Washington pass down the old turnpike from her vantage point on old Coffin Rock, still to be seen on the Hastings' farm. "Last of the Eastford Slaves," presented by Mrs. Florence Latham assisted by Miss Esther Harmon and Miss Belle Fryer, who was the author of the manuscript. This episode is based on the history of the Warren house now the residence of William Warren and the remains of the "underground railway" are still to be seen there. "General Lyon saves Missouri for the Union," was presented by Miss Cornelia Trowbridge and written by Miss Dorothy Church of Ashford. A number of Ashford and Eastford people took part in this stirring bit of history of the town's hero.

The episodes closed with a most beautiful pageant, the "March of the Nations," in which all the nationalities of foreign born Eastford residents were represented. With songs in native tongue, native folk dances and beautiful costumes, such as only the European countries can produce, each and every country contributed to the color of the day. Of particular beauty were the folk dances presented by the Ukrainians and Swedes. Those who had taken part in the other episodes now joined "the nations" on the platform and

with the entire audience saluted the flag and closed with the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner." Those who desired to take part in the program of sports under the direction of Oscar Erickson, director of Camp Keemosabee on Crystal Lake, now repaired to the lawn of A. S. Walker's home. Here the winners of the various games were: Baseball throw, George Chilkott; newspaper dressing, the Misses Tuma, Willis and Latham; log-chopping, Raymond Barrows; bag-busting race, Allard, Bunnell, Latham; candle-relay, Tatem and Bunnell; wheelbarrow race, Curley and Hedges.

A banquet was served at General Lyon Hall in the evening at which Judge Edwin S. Thomas was toastmaster. He called on many guests who recalled the past and many now living in Eastford, who not only recalled but told of the present. This period of reminiscencing was most interesting to those who listened and most entertaining to "those who came back" for this Old Home Day. Mrs. Clara Bass, 80, reminded listeners that she had attended General Lyon's funeral, that she well remembered her father reading "news from the front," during the Civil War, when she and her brother were hushed, so serious was the situation to their elders—and then the news of Lincoln's death.

A costume dance in the Hall was the closing feature of the day. Miss Mary King received first prize for the ladies costumes, Miss Julia Dechand, second, (Miss Dechand wore the dress and accessories worn by her mother when the latter arrived here from France) and Miss Edith King, third. Stowell Walker as Uncle Sam received the men's prize. An old fashioned Quadrille was also a feature of the evening. Those who took part in the prize quadrille received blue ribbons. On Sunday, the second and last day of the celebration, church service was held on the hill in the old church, over one hundred years old, having been built in 1829, and whose founding society was organized in 1778. The morning service was carried out in the manner of our fathers, so that the congregation stood during the announcement of the text, marched to the altar with their offerings at the direction of the deacons who sat on the front seat to keep order.

The Rev. Walter Lanphear preached the sermon, which outlined the history of the church telling of the days when pews were sold at auction and deeded to the purchasers. Mrs. Grace Jones of Groton, once an Eastford girl, sang the solo "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes," and the regular church choir sang "I Have Set Watchmen Upon My Wall" as the anthem. The church was filled to capacity with the overflow seeking seats in the gallery. In the afternoon, Allen B. Lincoln of Hartford and Ashford, gave an address fitting to the day. A choir of some thirty girls sang two anthems from the back of the church under the direction of the organist, Mrs. M. Darwin Lewis.



## The Sermon

About the only real value of a historical sermon is in so far as it may help to avoid the mistakes and to emulate the virtues of the past. Hence, in these items of history, as such, I have no primary interest. It is not in the dead and the past; but in the living and the future that we must have our great concern. We may be proud or ashamed of our fathers, but the real matter is as to whether they would have reason to be proud or ashamed of us. It may be that our fathers "built better than they knew," are we building as well as we know? If we are inclined to belittle the Puritan ways of our fathers and mothers, let us reflect as to whether our own ways are evidently leading toward higher things than did their ways. Our fathers revolutionized their lives and fortunes; that they might have freedom for themselves and might win it for their children; do we celebrate them and their deed by prohibiting freedom of speech and of assembly on a college campus of the state? We are all dressed up and going somewhere, but where are we going? May not such considerations be in our minds as we glimpse some of the high spots of the past?

Since Mr. Lincoln, this afternoon is to deal with the more general history of the state, during its 300 years, following Mr. Chappell of yesterday in his perfect historical address, I will confine myself to the local. And the propriety of considering the local is amply suggested by the fact there would be no Connecticut were it not for the various towns of Connecticut.

And, since, as in almost all of the towns of the state, so here, the town of Eastford grew up around the church as being its center and soul, it is therefore in keeping that we give the very limited time to the history of the church.

But, as concerns the beginnings of the state, we here are notable in that the trail of Thomas Hooker and his company ran through the upper part of our town.

I have here a mass of material and shall need to use some wisdom in what to include and what to leave out. But be sure that unless I lose consciousness altogether the two ends of this sermon will be within speaking distance (?) of each other. It has seemed to me that we would get the most real good if I confine myself to hardly more than a mere chronicle of events. If you get too weary in trying to listen let me assure that this church is one of the best places in which to take a nap; for I have many times seen that thing done here, in past years. If I have to omit some of my material, it may be you would like to have it printed, so as to preserve it entire.

For my material I am indebted to Miss Larned's history; but mostly to a thorough study of original records which are in the hands of your church clerk—records of which I had never dreamed until this occasion. Eastford was named as east parish of Ashford, 1777; incorporated from Ashford, 1847.

Territory—included in Ashford and Eastford formed part of the Wabbaquasset Country, conveyed to Major Fitch by Owaneco in 1684. This Owaneco was the first son of the chieftain Uncas (whose third son, Joshua, inherited the tract from which Windham, Hampton, Mansfield and Chaplin, were taken). (Connecticut path)

"The first land laid out within the present townships was a tract four miles square, now the south part of Eastford—" "In—(1711) land was sold to John Perry—who soon settled upon it, near the site of the present Eastford Village." "The region was rough, rocky and unattractive, a great portion of it still covered with dense forest, the large number of ash trees, suggesting the name of the township"—though, otherwise the name is supposed to be from Ashford in England. "Two white families, five miles apart, were the only white inhabitants."

In 1712 the (General) Court ordered, "That any person claiming any right to land in Ashford should appear at the General Court in the following October, and there set forth their pretended claims." "The right of Major Fitch to this land was now openly denied—"

"The first town meeting was held early in 1715." "March 13, the town voted to go on with the meeting-house, hew timber and get it ready to raise." (What house was this?) That this meeting house was on the hill where the present one stands at Ashford Town, would be indicated by the apparent fact that the early settlement seems to have been in the east part of the town rather than at Warrenville?

But work on meeting house and minister's house was delayed by difficulties in titles to land. In January 1718, it was voted "That the town doth grant all those lands that have been already granted to be free and clear—and "The lands not previously laid out they proceeded to divide among the inhabitants—"

In 1719 "Ashford—had about 40 families, about equally divided between the eastern (Eastford) and western sections." From 1718 to 1722 several families, including Joseph Bosworth and Edward Sumner, "bought land in the east of the town—adjoining Pomfret."

In 1728 "All the inhabitants of the town were warned to assist in repairing this bridge"—over the Bigelow River.

"In 1734, the one school master for the town was to be replaced by three 'school dames'—one school to be on the east side of Bigelow River" (in Eastford).

In 1751, Rev. Mr. Bass, the second minister of the Ashford church, was dismissed from the church "for dissenting from the Calvinistic sense of the Quinquarticular Points, which said he "I ignorantly subscribed to before my ordination—" He had in the church some sympathizers. These, "mostly residents in the east part of the town (Eastford) desired to be set off as a society." To this end they petitioned the Assembly (Legislature) setting forth at great length their request. They were refused, as were also the residents in the northwest part of the town (Westford).



In—? "Ephraim Lyon removed from Woodstock to the east part of the town and was greatly esteemed as a man of shrewdness and sound judgement" (Was this an ancestor of General Lyon?) "David Bolles of New London established himself near the present Eastford Village, with a license to exercise "the art and mystery of tanning leather and great skill and experience in working up the same into servicable shoes."

"At the town meeting, April 1762—after long and vehement discussion it was voted by a majority of one, "That the town will divide in three equal societies"—as follows: "The east part shall have one third part of said town, for quantity, set off to them, for an ecclesiastical society, which shall extend west and bound on the Bigelow River, provided there is one-third part of Eastford on the east side of said river—" "Sixty-seven residents of the eastern and central sections—(objected to the division and) declared "—that the meetinghouse will be left within one mile of the east end, so that we shall be put to the expense of building a new one." In keeping with this objection, the east part of the town still remained in connection with the central part, in matters of church worship, although the Westford Society was set off in 1765.

In "October, 1777,—upon petition of Benjamin Sumner and others showing that they were of ability to support the gospel in two societies, they were endowed with distinct society privileges," the west line to be Bigelow River. "Notwithstanding the heavy burden now laid upon all classes by the war, the number of absent citizens and the many pressing public duties, the residents of Eastford Society manifested great spirit and readiness in establishing public worship.—it was also voted "To build a meeting-house in Eastford Society, about 4 or 5 rods northwest from where Capt. Benjamin Russell's old shop used to stand." June 30, it was further voted "That the County Court's committee should stick a stake (for the location of the house) on Lieut. John Russell's land. "—those that subscribe towards building a meeting-house have liberty to build it of equal bigness with Woodstock West Society's meeting-house, i. e., 45x35."

Mr. Andrew Judson of Stratford "consenting to preach as a candidate, public services were held September 23, 1778, when "Andrew Judson, Benjamin Sumner, Samuel Snow, Johnathan Chapman, Elisha Wales and Simeon Deane entered into church covenant in presence of the Reverends Stephen Williams, John Storrs and Elisha Hutchinson, making a solemn and fresh dedication of themselves, and being formed into a church." "On October 13 the church unanimously voted Mr. Judson to be their gospel ministr, the society concurring in the call and offering 500 pounds settlement. 70 pounds salary.— Various members were received by a dismissive and commendatory letter from the first church of "Ashford"— (the mother church).

The Society voted "That the Society Committee should set up Society warnings when we have no Preaching, at Josiah Spaulding's, Joseph Kendels, and Caleb Grosvenors, and when we have preaching to put them up where the Publick Worship is held, as the law directs."

"Voted a rate of five pence on the pound to be raised on the 1777 list to pay for preaching."

In 1778 Society "Voted that the meetings upon the Sabbaths for the future should be holden at Josiah Spaulding's."

"Voted Mr. Daniel Allen Four Pound Ten Shillings for his trouble a going after the Preacher for this Society."

"Work on the meeting house was greatly impeded by scarcity of men and money. The frame was raised in the summer of 1779 and partly covered so that business meetings were held in it, but religious services were conducted at the house of Mr. Aaron Tufts, or Lieut. Russell's or Capt. Josiah Spaulding's."

In Sept. 1779, "Put to vote in said meeting whether the Society would do anything toward finishing the meeting-house this winter. Voted in the negative." Also "Voted to choose a committee to treat with Mr. Aaron Tufts to see if the Society may meet at his house through the winter season for Divine Worship," as a result of which it was found that "the Society had liberty to meet at his house three months in the Winter Season, and likely three months more if need be." The next winter "Voted to meet for divine worship this Winter Season one half the time at Lieut. John Russell's and the other half at Josiah Spaulding's."

Also in 1779 "Voted that the Societies Committee shall abate the rates of all those Baptists who have brought certificates, and also those that frequently attend the Baptist Meeting,"—which would seem to mean that the Baptists were excused from paying taxes to support the Congregational church, but it seems to have been a matter of GRACE.

In 1780 "Voted to sell the pew ground at vendue (auction)—the space in the church floor— and the money to be appropriated toward finishing the meeting-house," the "covering" not having been completed, nor pews made. It was "voted that the pew ground upon the right hand of the pulpit, as the minister sets in the pulpit, be for the use of the ministry." There were at that time 25 pews and they sold at auction for from \$13 to \$41.00, each. It was voted to purchase half a box of glass to glaze the meeting-house and hire it underpinned in the cheapest and best way." "Glass being found too expensive the order was countermanded and 'the windows boarded up' till times were more propitious." It was voted again to abate the rates (taxes?) of all those Baptists that have brought a certificate and those that frequently attend the Baptist meeting"

In 1781, "Voted that the Societies Committeemen should get a door lock for the meeting house."

In 1782 "Voted to the singers the Front fore seat (?) and the second seat (viz) as much of said seats as they need." "Voted that all the



singers may sit in the two front seats." "Voted—a committee to dispose of the back seats in the galleries."

In 1783 there was a vote to pay "Six dollars to Ebenezer Bosworth for 4 inches wantage of his pew ground."

Also in 1783 there were votes according to which certain pews in the gallery were 5 by 5 1-2 feet and those "over the stairs to be 6 1-2 feet square, each." "The pew over the men's stairs bid off—at \$13.50. Pew over the women's stairs bid off—at 15 dollars."

Also in this year there is another vote as to money from pew ground to be used in finishing the meeting house."

In 1784 it was "Voted to choose a committee to confer with the Rev. Mr. Judson and Capt. John Work with respect to Mr. Judson's more comfortable support among us." In this year it was "Voted to raise one penny on the pound on the A. D. 1784 list to glaise the meeting house." "Voted liberty for any that belong to the Society to build horse-sheds upon the meeting house green, except east from the meeting house." "Voted John Russell, Jr., six shillings for taking care and sweeping the meeting house the past year." And just think of the janitor's salary now!

In 1786 there were yet votes as to building pews, which evidently had not been built according to former votes. Also, "Voted that the committee should employ some blacksmith to make some hinges and some bolts for the meeting-house north door and hang it."

In 1788, two gentlemen were voted "pew ground in the front of the floor fronting the pulpit: each pew ground to be six feet square; and in payment for said pew ground said gentlemen shall finish or build the body of the seats below; also the breast-works round the galleries, answerable to the pulpit; and three seats round the galleries, all to be done workmen-like. According to which, it seem, that even yet the church had not been "finished."

During those years we are told that "Capt. Benjamin Sumner was still at the head of town (Ashford) affairs and sometimes designated as king of Eastford Parish." It seem that Pres. Washington passed on the old Boston-Hartford turnpike, Saturday, November 7, 1789 and came to "Perkin's Tavern in Ashford," where "he rested on the Sabbath day, according to commandment." Of the Tavern (Perkins) the truthful Washington wrote, "It is not a good one."

In 1790 pew ground was laid out and sold to highest bidder—thirteen of them for 50 pounds and 3 shillings.

In 1791, "Voted that the Societies Committee should choose a committee to hire two months preaching this present fall."

In 1792, "Voted to choose a committee to prefer a petition to the honorable Association to supply the pulpit here in Eastford this summer coming."

In 1793, a similar vote was taken, asking for preaching by the Association. Also a vote to lay a tax to raise money to pay "the Rev. Mr. Judson's salary. Was this back salary? It would seem from these votes for help in preaching by the Association that Mr. Judson must have been temporarily absent.

In 1794, another vote of thanks to the minister of the Association for supplying the pulpit and asking the same for the year ensuing. Also a vote to "hire preaching for eleven sabbaths if there should be enough money subscribed." Mr. Judson was in poor health and was something of a hypochondriac, so that he "was given liberty to ride" for his health for about a year.

In May, 1795 we find reference to a council to act on Mr. Judson's "petition to be discharged from this church and people." But evidently Mr. Judson remained, for in 1797 he gives receipts for payment of salaries for the past three years. It seems to have been the ordinary thing not to pay the pastor anything until the end of the year. Question: How did he live in the meantime?

In 1800, after one or more late requests of Mr. Judson to be dismissed, we find a vote to "allow the Rev. Andrew Judson 42 pounds after the 8 shillings to make up all back depreciations." This was after the "prices current of articles of produce and families use in the years 1776 and 1797 and 1799" had been compared by a committee, and it had been found the the figure of Mr. Judson's salary as at first set was too low in view of present prices. How about that for a Christian way of doing things? Then his salary was raised from 70 to 82 pounds, sterling.

During these years we find numerous quit-claim deeds to pews in the church, by people who had removed from the town, in keeping with the fact that the pews were actual property, and were conveyed by legal deeds.

In 1803 "Voted to paint the meeting-house white if the money can be raised by subscription."

In Nov., 1804 "Voted to continue the usual salary that was given to Rev. Andrew Judson from the time of his decease, to be paid to the bereaved widow so long as the neighboring ministers shall supply us with preaching;" according to which it seems that the bright angel had finally acted to dismiss the faithful pastor.

In 1805, "Voted (by the Society, not the church?) that we will petition to the General Assembly—to make up the deficiency by granting us a lottery—" I do not find whether the lottery was granted, nor do I stop to comment.

In March, 1808, "Voted that the committee hire no man to supply the pulpit more than four sabbaths in succession without having the voice of the Society in this respect." Hence it seems, that five years had passed since the death of Mr. Judson, with no regular minister. But later in the same year we find a vote to "disannul" the vote of limitation, so that the committee might hire a minister for more than 4 Sabbaths.

In November, 1809, the Rev. Hollis Samson was ordained as minister.



In the same year "Voted that the Widow Mary Judson may have a seat in the ministerial pew in Eastford Meeting house for the time she remains Rev. Andrew Judson's widow."

In 1813 there was a move to see what Mr. Samson would require "to satisfy him to continue to be the pastor of this church and Society, and if found expedient to see what can be obtained by subscription as an encouragement for him to stay with us."

For several years we have records of votes to lay a tax of 4 (?) cents on the dollar to raise money to pay the salary.

In 1816, Mr. Samson was dismissed at his own request.

In April, 1817, "Voted to hire preaching the ensuing season as long as money can be obtained by subscription to pay there for."

In November 1819, "Voted to engage the Rev. David Dickinson to preach further with us as a candidate, and with a view to his settlement with us in the ministry." The Society and the church were to confer with Mr. Dickinson, but nothing seems to have come of it.

In April, 1820, Reuben Torrey accepted an invitation to "settle in the gospel ministry over the church and people of this society and that they will give him four-hundred and fifty dollars and also twenty cords of good wood at his door, a year, to be paid annually, the wood in the course of the year for his supply, and the money at the end of each year, so long as he continues our minister."

In May of that year, Mr. Torrey was ordained pastor. In August of that year, voted, "That the committee of five above mentioned be authorized and advised to visit members of the church one half day in a month, to grant them any temporal and spiritual favors in their power and to converse and pray with them for a revival." Also "That Peter S. Minard (?) and Asa Pratt shall be a committee to receive a contribution at each monthly concert for prayer; which contribution is to be presented to the 'American Board' of Commissioners for Foreign Missions for the use of its mission established by them among our American Indians." November 4th "By a vote of the church, Raymond Williams was excommunicated from this church, agreeably to the rules of the Gospel."

In 1823 there was a committee to "Learn whether he, the pastor, would under, and in view of the difficulty of raising the same (salary) make an abatement therefrom."

In August, 1824, "the church assembled for the purpose of renewing their covenant obligations and of cherishing a spirit of union and brotherly love. Between forty and fifty of the church were present," and the day was spent in exhortations, and addresses and a renewal of dedication to the Covenant. "It was found that one hundred and eight members constitute this church, half of which, nearly are nonresidents."

In 1825, after several meetings in which charges were heard against "brother Jones," on the grounds of his working-against-the-church and its pastor and of falsehood, the brother was brought to an acknowledgement of his misdeeds and he was continued as a member in good standing; but was soon granted a "letter of dismissal and recommendation to the Methodist church of this place."

In 1827, "Voted— "to ask the Domestic Missionary Society for more (?) aid" to help pay the minister's salary.

In these years, as before and afterward, there are numerous cases of church discipline, conducted in a most Christian way, and usually with the result of excommunication.

In 1828, "Voted to—see on what terms the pews in said meeting-house owned by dissenters and those also owned by members of said Society might be obtained and given up so as to be owned by the Society."

In 1829, "Voted that the Society approve the plan to build a new meeting house for Eastford Society—provided money can be obtained without leaving a debt therefor against said Society," and the minister (strange to say) was given the honor "to solicit subscriptions and receive donations—." Also Benjamin Bosworth was chosen "agent for said Society relative to the old meeting house and to confer with, and if may be, come to a settlement with those Dissenters or others who claim rights in said meeting-house" —by virtue, of course, of having bought "pew ground." "Voted that the Society's Committee be a Committee to cause the old meeting-house to be got out of the way, seasonable to prepare the place and lay the underpinning stones by the time the new meeting-house is to be raised, and that they are authorized to do the same, either by taking the old meeting-house down or moving the same whole, as they may find to be best."

These votes were taken in the spring of 1829 and during the summer the old house was moved and the new one—this present one—built. Concerning the moving of the old one we have of course the classic story of the "strike" by enough of the workmen, so that the building was stranded part way down the hill, the men refusing to work unless they were furnished with rum and the head man (Who was it?) refusing to furnish the same. Then it seems there was the joke by some who wanted to "petition" the General Assembly for a law prohibiting meeting houses from roaming around and blocking the roads. In December of that year "Voted to rent the slips in the new meeting-house until the first day of June next, toward paying the Rev. Reuben Torrey's salary the present year." Note that the former plan of selling and giving deeds to pew ground was replaced, in this new church, by the plan of renting the slips—the slips being, probably (not six feet square, as were the pews) but the ones in which you are now sitting?

"The Committee for renting the pews gave due notice—and sold to the highest bidder, as follows: Benjamin Bosworth, No. 3, at \$10.00, Robert Green, No. 25, at \$7.25, and so on. The highest-numbered slip



was 48, and the rentals totaled \$382.55.

In June 1830, "Voted that the Society Committee be authorized to engage some person or persons to ring the bell and take care of the meeting-house the ensuing year." Thus it seem the bell came with the new meeting-house.

"The refusal of the Congregationalists to allow their new church edifice to a distinguished minister incited his followers to unite with the Methodists in building a house for their joint accommodation. A Methodist society was located in Eastford village in 1831 and a chapel built the same year, used alternately by Methodists and Universalists." (Larned).

In May, 1831, among other items, it was "Voted that Benjamin Warren, Clifford Thomas and Increase Sumner have liberty to build them a shed on the north line of the Green east of Benjamin Bosworth's barway, where the old shed stood."

In 1834, "Voted that the Committee undertake to raise money by subscription to procure the bell to be regularly rung in our meeting-house the ensuing year." "Voted that in consideration of Esch (?) J. Preston promoting the singing in our Society and leading the singing in the meeting-house" to relinquish the rent of his slip for the present or ensuing year." In May of this year, Oliver Watkins buried in this town. The only man executed in Brooklyn.

According to the records a parsonage was built in 1834, but in 1836, "Voted to refer it to the Society's committee to see if they can raise the money by subscription or donation, to pay the Rev. Reuben Torrey, what he had paid over what he agreed to—toward building the house, barn, etc., in which Mr. Torrey now lives (parsonage), so that the premises may be the property of the Society, according to the terms of the subscriptions, or that they might otherwise settle with Mr. Torrey on his proposal in case the money can not be raised to pay him." This proposal was, "that the house and all the premises be Mr. Torrey's. From the records it appears that Mr. Torrey owned the land on which the parsonage was built, and that he paid bills so that the Society owed him \$250, about the settlement of which account there was a good deal of discussion.

In 1840, Mr. Torrey was dismissed by council. Afterward we find it "Voted—that a committee be appointed to prize the parsonage and divide it into shares and see if they can obtain individuals to purchase them." In July 1840 a meeting "to see if the Society will give Rev. Mr. Woodward a call to settle with us in the gospel ministry.— After discussion and remarks it was voted that we continue Mr. Woodward longer as a candidate for settlement." But in August the church and Society voted to call Mr. Woodward "and that the sum of \$400 be offered him yearly for his services." "The Com-

mittee waited on Mr. Woodward and in addition to the offer of the Society at their meetnig they proposed as further inducement to sell him the pasonage at \$700 and to insure him \$50 in presents the first year." To these proposals Mr. Woodward gave a negative answer on the ground that sum would be insufficient for his support." Later, "Voted that Mr. Benjamin Warren be instructed to sell the parsonage to Mr. Woodward on as good terms as possible." "Mr. Warren went to East Windsor to see Mr. Woodward and he finally declined entirely to come to Eastford, and Mr. Warren sent to Litchfield to engage Mr. Bishop and employed Mr. Williams until he, (i. e., Bishop) could be obtained. Mr. Bishop came afterward and preached ten or twelve sabbaths." It seems that Mr. Torrey was on the ground still in 1841, for there was a vote "to charge the Rev. R. Torrey 20 dollars for the use of the parsonage five months."

"The Committee sold the parsonage at public auction, March 22nd, 1841, for the sum of 825 dollars," and, "The surplus money obtained for the parsonage, above paying our debts, be put to interest at 6 per cent." "Voted that the Society approve the doings of the Committee in sending for the Bass Viol." "Voted that the Society Committee procure by subscription sufficient funds to defray the expense of ringing the bell at noon on each day for the term of six months next ensuing and engage some person to perform the same." "Voted to appropriate the remainder of the Society's funds arising from the sale of the parsonage house, not otherwise appropriated, towards paying for the Bass Viol and painting the meeting-house."

In 1841, Francis Williams was called, and in September was ordained. Thus began a ministry of great significance to this entire region. It was while here that Mr. Williams found his wife, some of whose relatives are still prominent in the church. Here be it said that Mr. Williams was later pastor of the Chaplin church for 34 years. He married my father and mother, Mrs. Lanphear's father and mother and married Alida and myself.

Mr. Williams remained here ten years and had a very fruitful ministry, being dismissed in November, 1851, on account "present and prospective want of support among the people of his charge," though (some) individuals had done and were still willing to do quite up to their means and ability." In November (after Mr. Williams had gone?) there was a vote to "receive the Seraphine presented by Rev. Francis Williams for use and benefit of the choir," which article is said to be a course-toned musical reed-instrument, played with a keyboard."

In 1844, "Voted to diminish the slip rent on Elbridge G. Watkins slip five dollars for the past year in consideration of his services as Chorister," which same was to be repeated the ensuing year "should he render similar service."

In 1852, the church voted to call the Rev. William Birchard, provided the Society Concur; but there is no further entry on that point:

1853, "Rev. Marvin Root of South Coventry supplied the pulpit mostly



till the middle of August at which time Rev. Henry Hanmer commenced and supplied till the first of April, 1854."

In 1854, a "Rev. Mr. Thompson of Salem, in this state, was asked about coming here but he "laid the subject before his (Salem) Society and they raised his compensation and he then declined to preach for us as candidate," so that "The Rev. Henry Hanmer continued to supply till January, 1855." Following brief supply periods by two others, "Rev. Sumner Clark commenced supplying us the middle of March," and "continued to supply this pulpit till into May, A. D. 1856."

In August, 1856, "Rev. Sidney Hilman, (was called) to settle in the gospel ministry," but "The above call was declined."

In March, 1857, there was considered the matter of a call to Rev. Mr. S. L. Arms and in 1858, "It was voted that it is understood that the Rev. Francis Williams of Bloomfield is expecting soon to leave that place—we do most cordially and affectionately invite him to settle with us again in the gospel ministry. The above vote was passed unanimously, all of the members of the church present voting." Evidently this did not carry through, for a little later a call was extended to the "Rev. Charles Chamberlin, whenever he shall be dismissed from the church in Ashford." Mr. Chamberlin accepted. In the meantime Mr. Williams had come to Chaplin and was present and took part in the installation of Mr. Chamberlin. Besides his salary of \$450, "It has also been mutually arranged that a donation visit shall be made during the first year and that Mr. Chamberlin has the privilege of being absent two sabbaths if he shall desire it."

In 1861 "Voted to allow Clark Barrows eight dollars for ringing the bell and making fires for the year."

In 1865, "A motion was made that we add to the salary of the minister one hundred dollars, with the understanding that the hundred dollars was to be raised by donation or festival as heretofore practiced and that this should be on condition that we receive the same sum as heretofore from the Home Missionary Society (viz) one hundred dollars." Thus the salary was raised to "five hundred and fifty dollars."

In March, 1867, an ecclesiastical council was called and the pastoral relations of Mr. Chamberlain were dissolved, on account of lack of competent support. Then intervened about 5 years during which the church seems to have been supplied by various ministers, until—

In April, 1872, Rev. C. M. Jones, whom I remember very well, was called to the pastorate, "and that we offer him six hundred and fifty dollars salary per annum, with the privilege of three weeks vacation in the year, and that we be at the expense of moving him."

In 1873, the salary was increased by one hundred dollars, on condition that the "Home Missionary Society pay \$62 of it."

In October, 1875, "Voted to accept the chapel and take deed of the same (and) to place a loan upon the property of \$3500 and the residue of indebtedness to be provided for by note of the committee."

In 1876, "It was voted that the pastor be requested to write to the absentees, requesting them to take letters from this church to the churches where they respectively reside or to state the reasons why they should still retain fellowship here—." It was also voted that (certain brethren) be appointed a committee to visit and labor with the resident members who neglect public worship—"There are many entries indicating the faithfulness with which the pastor and church watched over the conduct of members and the purity of the church roll of membership."

In April, 1879, Instructed Society Committee not to let the church for any other purpose than (that for) which it was dedicated."

In April, 1882, "Voted to appropriate not to exceed \$18.00 to procure the printing of the centennial sermon, and services on that day for distribution." (What centennial?)

In September, 1883, "Voted to instruct the Society's Committee to dispose of the old instrument (the seraphine?) to the best advantage and apply the proceeds to the deficiency in the organ fund." "About \$300 had been subscribed together with \$67 from the Sewing Society—making about \$367.00. Voted to raise the same to \$400 and to raise the additional \$100 by asking twenty individuals to pledge themselves—."

In April, 1884, "Voted that all monies now due the Society be applied to extinguish the debt for preparing the church for the organ."

In June, 1888, after 16 years, Mr. Jones was regularly dismissed from the pastorate. And here let us pause to recall that, aside from being a faithful pastor, Mr. Jones was a very unusual ornithologist and taxidermist, his collection of specimens having been welcomed and preserved by \_\_\_\_\_ College.

In August, 1889, "Voted unanimously that we concur with the church in giving the Rev. F. D. Chandler a call to be our Gospel Minister and that we give him \$400 a year, and the use of a parsonage. Salary in connection with what he may receive from the Connecticut Home Missionary Society."

In March, 1892, "Motion made and supported that F. D. Chandler should not be hired longer than June 1st—so voted." Mr. Chandler was not installed by council and his dismissal was also without council." In December, the same year, Rev. J. L. Trowbridge, from his former church in Standish, Me., was called and installed, at a salary of \$1000, "providing West Woodstock will pay the sum of \$400, aid from the Home Missionary Society included in this sum."

In March, 1894, it was voted "that the church become a corporate body as provided by the statute laws of the state." This incorporating of the church seems not to have been accomplished for some time; for in 1908 we have a notice of meeting of the Congregational church and Society. But after that date the church alone seems to have the field. And thus, for this town there ended the embodiment of the old idea of a church-state, (church-business) combination, which had been a hang-over from the old state-church regime.

In 1902, "Whereas Mr. Benjamin Green of Brunswick, Me., a native



of this town has given to this church the sum of \$1800 towards the purchase of a parsonage; therefore be it resolved—." It seem that what came to be the parsonage had been owned by Mr. Jones, and was bought from him for \$2100, the church paying the balance of \$300 necessary beyond the gift of Mr. Green.

In 1901, October, Mr. Trowbridge resigned and was dismissed by council.

In 1902, Rev. J. K. Aldrich was called to the pastorate and he began his work June 8. This was holding in 1904 and the salary "five hundred dollars and use of parsonage." No note of close of that pastorate.

In the spring of 1905, William L. Linaberry was called from his church in Barkhamsted, and accepted the call.

In 1908, Mr. Linaberry resigned and James B. King was called.

In 1914, "Voted to accept the offer of a furnace from the Willimantic church and to install the same in our church and delay painting the outside of the church if necessary."

In 1915, "It was voted to use the card system for raising money for running expenses and missionary offerings." I am surprised to see that this church ever raised money by the "Card System," especially under the pastorate of Mr. King (?). And now we record the resignation of Mr. King from the pastorate, and his letter of resignation together with the letter of response by the church, is a most worthy example of what such communications might well be. Since Mr. Trowbridge the ecclesiastical council-plan had not been used in calling or dismissing a minister; and that change seems to have been desirable.

In May, 1916, Rev. Arthur F. Lin-scott accepted a call to the pastorate, but in the fall of that same year he was called to the Church above, having left behind a brief record of faithful service with this church.

In the fall of 1916 this church and the then existing Methodist church arranged for joint services during the winter.

In January 1917, "The joint rules of the Congregational and Methodist churches were ratified by the church, for the government of the two churches this winter." In April the churches joined in a call to Rev. Stanley C. Sherman, who came to the pastorate.

In March 1919, after a little less than two years, Mr. Sherman resigned to take the pastorate of the church in Rutland, Mass.

In January, 1920, Rev. Frank T. Meacham of Grinnell, Iowa, was called and as a result, his sister was later called to become Mrs. Harry Tatem, and they "lived happily ever afterwards." After a little more than a year, Mr. Meacham was called to enter the foreign mission work, under our American Board.

In October, 1921, Rev. Frank K. Abbott was called from Bolton, Conn., the salary to be paid by the Congregational and Methodist Episcopal churches.

Early in 1925, Mr. Abbott resigned, especially on account of the illness of his wife, and the church in accepting his resignation made special mention of his work among the foreign population. Also in the spring of this year, "It was voted not to continue the cooperation of the two churches for the next year, from this date." Concerning the relationship between the churches, it finally appears to me to be a fact that they never were really federated, as was by some supposed. And here be it said that the Methodist church was formally discontinued in 1927 or '28—as I recall the date, the building becoming used as the town hall.

In September, 1926, there was a vote "to extend a call to Mr. Neal, which call seems not to have carried. In the fall of that year Walter Lanphear began preaching in the church and

In 1927, was chosen as pastor. In the summer of this year, in keeping with plans earlier made, a new parsonage was built, the old parsonage being sold to its present occupants, the Misses Gurnee.

In the summer of 1928, Sunday School rooms were built on to the west end of the church. In August "The 150th anniversary celebration of the Eastford Congregational Society was held on August 18th—", with services morning, afternoon and evening. The Saturday before was an Old Home Day, with a picnic which was rather damaged by the weather, as recorded. But now, as to this matter of exact dates and names; from the records, it appears that the Society was begun in 1777 and it was the church that was organized in 1778, September 23rd, while the original church was built in 1779.

In the fall of 1929, Mr. Lanphear resigned, and in the spring of 1930 the present beloved and efficient pastor, George Reese was called.

In this should have been included an outline of the history of the town, itself; also of the schools and other factors in the life of the town. The Methodist church and the Baptist church at North Ashford should have had a larger place, as well as the development of the industrial life of the town. Then there is General Lyon, a great son of the town of Phoenixville:

The records are such that it seems impossible to compute the total membership of the church from its beginning. The population of the town in 1840 was 1,127, the high point; from which a steady drop to 496 in 1920, from which a rise to 529 in 1930.

And thus endeth the reading of that lesson of the history, in merest outline. LET IT BE REFLECTED UPON, that we have seen only the skeleton of the body. The real church, its real work and significance for thousands of lives and souls are not more than suggested by this outline.

As said at the beginning, these facts are interesting to me, but of much greater importance than these facts of the past is the question as to what we of our day are doing and are going to do. From the early part of these records we have seen a gradual falling off of special and dramatic incidents, down to the present when there has not been much to record beyond the routine. In the nature of the case as a community passes beyond the pioneer stage and comes to established and settled conditions, the special and dramatic become less frequent among its events.

But I ask you to think whether, had



we in this town and in this nation, lived up to the dynamic spirit and power of Jesus Christ—whether we would not constantly have been finding new frontiers of life and a call for constant pioneering in new realms and levels of Christlike endeavor, in fellowship with him who said, "Behold I make all things new." There can not be the slightest doubt on the part of real thinking people that spiritually our total American life, in church and state, has been dwarfed and blighted. We are wizards intellectually; but spiritually we are wizened. We suffer from lack of real vision as to what the coming of the kingdom of God on earth really means or demands of us. And "where there is no vision, the people perish." It is all to the good to glorify the past but unless we are inspired by it to make the present and future more exceedingly glorious, then we become ignominious. We do well to look back and reverence our fathers, but let us be assured that if we are really to honor them we shall imitate their example and spend most of our thought in planning and working for the present and future. Our fathers were revolutionists and pioneers and we stupidly think to honor them by trying to keep things as they made them and left them. Not such were they! They were not saying that 'what was good enough for their fathers was good enough for them,' but rather, "what was good enough for our fathers was not what they would have us to have for ourselves and our children." Our revolutionist and pioneering fathers did an absolutely new thing and produced a constitution, and we, their standpat and recreant children pride ourselves on merely defending that constitution. Our fathers were not made for the constitution but the constitution for our fathers, but we are inclined to think that the welfare of millions of people is not so important as that the constitution should be kept intact. I will let no one exceed myself in demanding constitutional government, nor in true reverence to that constitution that our fathers gave us and for the establishing of which my own fathers fought, but I am inclined to demand that we also recognize that the fathers themselves saw the inevitable need of growth in the constitution so that they inserted in that instrument provisions for its amending, as need should arise. "New occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth." As I have before said, our fathers were not perfect, but about the worst thing that can be said about them is that they were our fathers; and the best thing about us is that we are their children. Let us not repeat the folly of the old pharisees, as we close our eyes to demands of the new day, by claiming 'Abraham for our father, but let us remember that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham! It is not fleshly lineage that counts, but rather spiritual descent. Are we spiritual children of our fathers, or are we spiritual aliens?

From the honored dead and from the Christ whom they loved and served, shall we not take an increased measure of devotion to the great cause and kingdom for which they gave so great a measure of devotion? "America, America, may God thy gold refine, till all success be nobleness, and every gain, divine."

"Show us the men on earth who care enough for faith and creed to-day,

To seek a barren wilderness for simple liberty to play.

We find them not

Despise their faith and creed who will

And if so be that it is saved

Rise up O men of God, the kingdom tarries long,

Bring in the day of brotherhood and end this night of wrong."

"Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets us and let us run the race set before us looking unto Jesus, the leader of our faith."

#### Ministers of the

#### Eastford Congregational Church

Andrew Judson	1777—1804
Hollis Samson	1809—1816
Reuben Torrey	1820—1840
Francis Williams	1841—1851
Charles Chamberlin	1858—1867
C. M. Jones	1872—1888
F. D. Chandler	1889—1892
John L. Trowbridge	1892—1901
J. K. Aldrich	1902—??
William A. Linaberry	1905—1908
James B. King	1908—1915
Arthur F. Linscott	1916—1916
Stanley C. Sherman	1917—1919
Frank T. Meacham	1920—1921
Frank K. Abbott	1921—1925
Walter Lanphear	1926—1929
George Reese	1930—

Total, 17      158 years

Of the 158 years, the church has been without a pastor at different seasons, totaling about sixteen years besides the brief periods incidental to a change in pastors. The long interludes were all previous to 1858. Seventeen pastors in all.

It would be interesting to have the list of deacons; and the total number of church-members, during the years, but the records are not such as to make that feasible.

Of these pastors, six are still living.

W. L.









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